

HUNGARY'S AND RUMANIA'S NAZIS-IN-RED

Hitler's Graduates Staff Stalin's New Order

BÉLA FABIAN

TWO correspondents of an American news agency called on Deputy Prime Minister Rákosi of Hungary in the summer of 1945. At the very outset of their conversation, one of the newspapermen produced a printed form whose text ran somewhat like this: "I admit that I was formerly a member of the Arrow Cross party. I pledge myself, from now on, to be faithful to the Communist party." "Is this declaration authentic?" the journalist asked. "Of course it is authentic," replied Rákosi. "How else could one build up a Communist party in this country? How else could I find enough Communists?"

By this and similar routes former Nazis have been swarming into the East European Communist parties, where they are received with open arms. The Nazis need a place of refuge, the Communist party badly needs members: here, obviously, is cause for a marriage of convenience. But so vast is the scale of this recruitment that it would seem to be just as much a marriage of true minds. Indeed, by now the people of these satellite countries—liberals, intellectuals, trade-union leaders, socialists, businessmen, workers, peasants, Jews—see little to distinguish the red

dictatorship from the previous brown one.

This state of affairs is not secret; and it would seem to have a rather important bearing on current political discussions. Yet it has received only the most fleeting attention in the American press or on the part of "progressive" opinion generally, so ingrained is some American liberals' habit of self-suspicion, and of focusing criticism on their own government as the real enemy. Foreign correspondents continue to devote themselves to long and indignant accounts of the elections of minor Nazis to some town council in one of the states of West Germany, while neglecting the emergence of the Communist-fascist regimes in the satellite countries. The term Communist-fascist is used advisedly. For in Eastern Europe it is not a case of the government making concessions to an unregenerate public opinion, or of a misguided generosity on the part of some leading officials, or of just plain stupidity or ill will. Rather is it a systematic policy of building a regime called Communist with personnel whose chief qualification for leadership in this enterprise is their demonstrated prowess in fascist movements.

Does this sound exaggerated? Well, here is a specimen "Who's Who" of some of the former Nazis in Hungary and Rumania who have blandly swapped the swastika for the hammer and sickle.

BÉLA FABIAN here presents us with a brief "Who's Who" of former fascists who have been rewarded for their past behavior with positions of authority in the Communist regimes of Hungary and Rumania; the list could be substantially expanded—apparently an impeccable fascist background is a special guarantee of fitness to rule in the "new proletarian democracies." Dr. Fabian was for seventeen consecutive years (1922-39) a member of the Hungarian parliament. After the Germans invaded Hungary in 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz, then to the concentration camps of Oranienburg, Sachsenhausen, and Ohrdruf, escaping from the latter in 1945. He arrived in this country in 1948.

KÁLMÁN ZOLNAY, one of the more vicious Nazi officials of the Pest county court, is remembered for having publicly urged that not only all persons of Jewish descent be deported, but also anyone having any Jewish friends or relatives, because "the Jews would certainly have contaminated his way of thinking." Under the Communist regime, Zolnay has become chief of the department that handles prison matters in the Ministry of

Justice. He has there gained some further notoriety by proposing legislation to make it the legal duty of every citizen to maintain close watch over a specified section in the vicinity of his own residence, and keep a written account of the activities of his neighbors.

MÁRTON BODONYI, who conducted the investigations against Cardinal Mindszenty, had served, under the name of Schweitzer, as a military prosecutor during the Nazi occupation. In that post he had demanded—and usually obtained—the penalty of hanging for every officer and soldier who deserted the Hungarian army, then fighting side by side with the Wehrmacht. After the Russians occupied Hungary, Bodonyi was appointed chief state prosecutor in Nyiregyhaza.

GYULA ALAPI, the infamous state prosecutor of the Mindszenty trial (who received a reward of 100,000 florins for successfully carrying out this special assignment), became a Communist party member in 1945. Previously, he had played an important role in Christian-Conservative student organizations: "The principles of Christian politics are a Christian order of the world, papal encyclicals, and the fight against the barbarism of Moscow," he once announced in a speech. In 1944, Alapi, then state prosecutor of Győr, joined the fascistic Arrow Cross party. "... A reliable party member and a zealous Nazi," is the notation on the margin of his party record. Today, Alapi represents the government at all major trials.

VILMOS OLTY, president of the court in the Mindszenty trial, as well as in the Vogeler and Rajk trials, is today perhaps the most widely known personage in Hungarian "jurisprudence." Previous to the German invasion, Vilmos Olty had been an extreme rightist. As an official in the Ministry of Justice in 1941, he was charged with the confiscation of mills belonging to Jewish persons, and executed the law with a zeal that went far beyond regulations. Subsequently, Olty joined the staff of the Hungarian-German Society and was sent to Munich on a scholarship for basic indoctrination in Nazi

ideology. After the Russians marched in, Olty joined the Communist party. In his capacity as a judge of the "People's Court" of Budapest in 1945, he was noted for the severity of his sentences. It was Olty who invented and introduced the practice of having "dress rehearsals" of trials, a technique put to efficient use in the Mindszenty and Vogeler cases. In the Rajk trial, Olty emphatically played upon anti-Semitic sentiment. He never failed to ask each defendant his father's and grandfather's names—in order to disclose a possible Jewish origin. He even forced Rajk, not a Jew, and in fact a known anti-Semite, whose brother had been an important official under the Nazis, to confess that he had conspired with the Zionists.

SÁNDOR ZÖLD, Hungary's present Minister of the Interior, first came to public notice on November 14, 1934, in the town of Debrecen. That day began a series of attacks on Jews at the medical college of Debrecen, in the course of which the Jewish students were driven out by the Nazis. Among the twenty-four anti-Semitic rioters arrested were Sándor Zöld and his close friend Szilard Ujhelyi, until recently an undersecretary (the third ranking official in each ministry) of the Communist government (he was swept away in a purge early in April). Sándor Zöld went on to practice medicine in Nagyvarad, a town he had to leave after performing an illegal abortion. He then moved up to the position of gynecologist at the hospital of Berettyóújfalú, where he is remembered as having been a Nazi. He became a councilor in the Ministry of the Interior as early as 1945 and soon advanced to undersecretary. On the demand of Rajk, Zöld was removed from his position by the Communist party because of involvement in a scandal—he was charged with receiving a share of the money extorted from the inmates of concentration camps by a fraudulent lawyer. After Rajk's fall, his successor had Zöld reappointed to his former position. In the summer of 1950, he became Minister of the Interior.

JÁNOS VIKOL began his medical career as a leading member of the Csaba Fraternal

Society, a right-wing medical students' organization. The Csaba repeatedly started riots against Jewish students, demanding that they not be allowed to sit on the same benches with the Christian students. After his graduation, Dr. Vikol became an active member of the rightist medical association, the M.O.N.E., which raised the demand that Jewish doctors should be limited to treating Jewish patients only. Captured on the Russian front in World War II, Vikol asked to be sent to Moscow, to the Communist party school there. Ernő Gerő, Rákosi's present Number Two, was one of his teachers at that school. Today, Dr. Vikol is undersecretary in the Ministry of Public Welfare.

ALAJOS ROTTENBILLER was formerly a district medical health officer in Budapest, and a card-bearing member of the Arrow Cross party. Dr. Rottenbiller joined the Communists in 1945 and at the present time enjoys the special protection of a top-ranking Communist minister's wife. He is chief inspector of public health in Hungary.

ANTAL BABITS, the present chairman of the Doctors' Union, in his former capacity of professor at the Szeged medical college, participated in the expulsion of Jewish students. A former card-bearing member of the Arrow Cross, he became a Communist party member in 1945. His wife, the actress Ilona Eszterházi, who joined the National Socialist party in Berlin, when acting in German films, is now a member of the National Theater in Budapest.

IVAN BOLDIZSÁR, Hungary's most prominent journalist, was until recently undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (He has been demoted, since then, to editor in chief of the Budapest daily *Magyar Nemzet*.) He was born the son of Jewish parents, but changed his religion. One of his articles, published in the *Nemzeti Ujsag* in the pre-Nazi era, and entitled "Thomas Mann and His Jews," is a prize specimen of anti-Semitic journalism. At the time of the deportations of Jews in 1944, Boldizsár continued to perform confidential assignments for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to receive his

salary. In the fall of 1944, an anti-Nazi conspiracy by high-ranking Hungarian army officers was betrayed to the authorities. Boldizsár, who was arrested along with the conspirators, was released after several days. Presumably, he played a dubious role in the betrayal—a fact which permitted the Communists to blackmail him mercilessly.

LÁSZLÓ PIROS, an unknown former cobbler, has achieved the most staggeringly successful military career under the present regime. Piros was one of the perpetrators of the infamous Miskolc pogrom in 1946, in the course of which several Jews were murdered by a Communist mob. When the government embarked on its new anti-Semitic trend in 1948, the hitherto unknown Piros came into prominence. Today, as commander of the Frontier Guards with the rank of a major general, his chief assignments are preventing Jews from escaping the country and the carrying out of deportations to the Soviet Union. He is also an alternate member of the Politburo.

BÉLA CSIKÓS NAGY can boast a long Nazi heritage. His parents were close friends and staunch supporters of the fascist murderer Szalasi, supplying him with food and other comforts during his three years' prison sentence in Szeged from 1938 to 1941. Csikós Nagy was secretary to the rightist Minister of Finance, Lajos Reményi Schneller (hanged in 1946), and wrote a pro-Nazi pamphlet proving the inevitability of Nazi victory in the war. Today he is the virtual head of Hungary's totalitarian economic system, and is known as the real power behind Zoltán Vas, head of the Planning Bureau.

TIBOR FAJTH, section chief of the Planning Bureau, was recently decorated with the Gold Medal of Labor by the Communist government. Fajth, a Communist party member since 1945, was in pre-Nazi times an official on the mayor's staff at the Budapest City Hall. As a member of the Arrow Cross, he conspicuously wore the party's insignia on the sleeve of his coat. Fajth bears a significant share of the responsibility for the death of his thirty-six Jewish colleagues at

City Hall who were sent to the Russian front by the Nazis. After the Nazi defeat, a delegation of Jewish survivors called on the mayor of Budapest and made a complaint against Fajth's holding office. "It doesn't matter who pushes the cart, so long as it keeps rolling," was the reply they received.

JOSEPH TAKÁCS, another section chief in the Planning Bureau and a close friend of Fajth, is also a former member of the Arrow Cross, and also shares responsibility for the death of the thirty-six Jewish City Hall officials. During the German occupation Takács was the mayor of Szolnok, where he supervised the rounding up and deportation of the town's Jews. After the Nazi defeat, he was appointed to a post in the Ministry of the Interior, being promoted after a few months to the rank of councilor.

SÁNDOR SCHMIDT, long-time Nazi, has been for years the omnipotent general manager of Hungary's greatest coal-mining company, which worked the mines of Dorog and of Salgótarján. His brutality to members of the Jewish labor battalions assigned to the coal mines under his direction in 1943 was a special scandal. The Communists have kept him at his post.

IVÁN BAKÓCZ joined the Communist party while still under investigation for his activities as a member of the Arrow Cross. He became deputy chief of the Communist Economic Police, and earned a quite special reputation for blackmailing, terror, and sadism. Not long ago, after his immediate superior was purged (via the gallows), Bakócz fled to the West.

ÁKOS MAYOR had formerly been assessor of the Military Court under the Nazis, in which capacity he passed ruthless sentences against Hungarian "deserters" from the Axis armies. In recognition of loyal service, Hitler bestowed upon him two high decorations. After the arrival of the Russians, Ákos Mayor was recruited into the Communist party by his brother, Tamás Mayor, now the director of the National Theater. Ákos Mayor became a judge, then president of the N.O.T., the court of appeal of the "People's Court,"

where he treated opponents of the Communists as harshly as he previously had anti-Nazis. One day Ákos Mayor disappeared without a trace and is rumored to have been "invited" to Russia.

EXCEPT for the difference in names, the situation in Rumania duplicates that in Hungary. In the fall of 1944, Tchari Georgescu, Rumania's Minister of the Interior, made an agreement with Grozdea, head of the extremist branch of the Iron Guard, by which the Communist party would henceforth welcome former Iron Guardists into its ranks. In a public speech in 1945, Communist boss Ana Pauker openly called upon the Iron Guard members to join the Communist party. It was in response to this call that such a man as Ion Burdycea, one of the Iron Guard leaders chiefly responsible for the Jassy pogrom in which 12,000 Jews were massacred, joined the Communist party in 1945, and until 1946 was actually—of all things—Minister of Education.

Here are a few of the outstanding ex-Nazis who, at this writing, wield Communist power:

STEFAN VOJTEC, a member of the Politburo, chairman of the state-owned cooperatives, Minister of Education from 1945-48, was formerly the editor of the *Sentinell*, the official press organ of the joint German-Rumanian general staff during the war.

GENERAL ALEXANDRU PETRESCU, the director of concentration camps under the Antonescu regime, recently presided over the military courts that sentenced Juliu Maniu, Ion Michalache, and other anti-Communists.

AUREL VIJOLI, a legionary commander of the Iron Guard, is today Assistant Minister of Finance and governor of the State Bank.

LOTAR RADACEANU, alias Wurzer, a former socialist of German descent, was an agent of German economic penetration of Rumanian industry during the war, and in that capacity he made numerous trips to Germany. Today he is one of the thirteen members of the Politburo of the Communist party, and, besides, a member of the seventeen-member

organizational bureau of the party. In addition, he is Minister of Labor and Social Security.

VICTOR VOJEN, former Iron Guard commander, former editor of the Iron Guard paper, and from October 1940 to January 1941 minister to Rome, has been since 1947 the private secretary and intimate of Ana Pauker.

APPROXIMATELY 200,000 members of the Rumanian middle classes are at present toiling as slave laborers on the construction of the Danube-Black Sea Canal. They live in tents, are without blankets, and their rations are below subsistence level. About 40,000 of them are Jews. Their guards are almost exclusively former members of the Iron Guards.

It is no wonder that the death toll of the victims exceeds a hundred a day.

A passage in a letter recently received by the writer from a friend who succeeded in escaping from behind the Iron Curtain precisely sums up the Hungarian-Rumanian situation: "The same people as under the Nazis are today locked up in prisons and concentration camps. These same people are guarded by the same persons who guarded them under the Nazis."

East may be East, and West, West; and perhaps the twain never shall meet. But in such countries as Hungary and Rumania, Left is not Left; nor is Right, Right. The twain—being totalitarian twins—have met, mingled, and merged into a regime of uniform terror.

I WAS THIS BLACK BOY

JACOB SLOAN

*Once I was walking about in the black of night and in darkness,
and saw a blind man walking with a torch in his hand.*

I said to him: My son, why the torch?

*He said to me: So long as this torch is in my hand, people see me
and save me from the pits and the thorns and the thistles.—Midrash*

I WAS this black boy bawling for my wool
arm, caught like a white fox in the sprung
trap of subway doors, calling, Pull! pull
me from the choking underground of mother!
—And all my sophist father does is show
in photograph his clever haircombed son
playing him with a real telephone.
I was my brother's son and held my blind
young anguish up high for men to see.
But my father had his own old torch,
my uncle saw my bleeding, but no thorns.

I am this man of peace whom all the bold
children shoot with tommyguns of tin,
and die a thousand mimic deaths,
yet trust
to live again till son of my delight
call me to the window, at his side
to watch the flashing signs of our God:
Who is the engineer and drives the train
underneath the pavement of our lives.
I am this man who rides dark with hope
till I be father, and my son bring light.

JACOB SLOAN is on the editorial staff of the *American Jewish Year Book*. The present poem is one in a series of five entitled "I Was, I Am." The other four have appeared in previous issues of COMMENTARY.